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OUR LONDON LETTER.

It is a sign of the times that the art department of the Social Science Congress, held this year at Nottingham, has attracted special attention. The President, Mr. George Aitchison, A.R.A., considered the many-sided question of the cultivation of the fine arts, in his address, and papers were read on the object and scope of an art professorship, and on the popularization of art. The question was discussed, "In what way can the influence of art be best brought to bear on the masses of the population in large towns?" and a resolution was adopted to the effect, "That this section recommend that the council request the science and art department, to seek to acquire the power of preparing and of selling at cost price to persons or societies interested in public education, representations of trees, birds, and other beautiful natural objects, good in respect both of fidelity to nature and of artistic quality."

Attempts of a similar character have been made at different times, but with small effect hitherto. At present little of an artistic nature is to be found in the homes of the English working classes. Captain Douglas Galton, in his excellent presidential address, delivered before the Congress of the Sanitary Institute, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, especially remarked on the difference, in this respect, which he noticed in America. He said, "I was much struck, when in the United States, with the fact that the artisan and wage classes, in many manufacturing towns, lived in very comfortable houses, in which each family had their parlor, with appropriate furniture, pictures, and often their piano;" and then added, "this is an evidence of the general civilization that

marks on the defects as well as the merits of the designers. Thus, in carpets more attention seems to be paid to the forms of design and the treatment of flowers and plants than to the really more important matter of coloring. The teachers should devote special attention to the cultivation of a refined color sense, which is, unfortunately, often wanting in English workers. That our ancestors had this sense is proved by the lovely stained glass to be seen in our cathedrals and old churches, which is thoroughly soul-satisfying. Almost all modern stained glass proves conclusively that this sense of harmony has been lost, not only by Englishmen, but by all other nations.

At South Kensington there is a structural collection of building materials, and last year it became a question whether it should be maintained, and if so, in what direction it should be developed. A committee, consisting of the late Mr. G. E. Street, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Abernethy and Major Seddon, was appointed to report on the whole question. The committee were in favor of the retention of the collection, and suggested revision of the contents and development in certain directions to make it efficient as a help to the work of the technical classes. They referred to the improvement in terra cotta for structural purposes which had placed the English maker in the front rank, to mosaic work, to ornamented tiles, and to the use of earthenware, plain and colored, for walls, ceilings, pillars, moldings and architectural enrichments, of all of which examples of great beauty are to be seen in various parts of the South Kensington Museum.

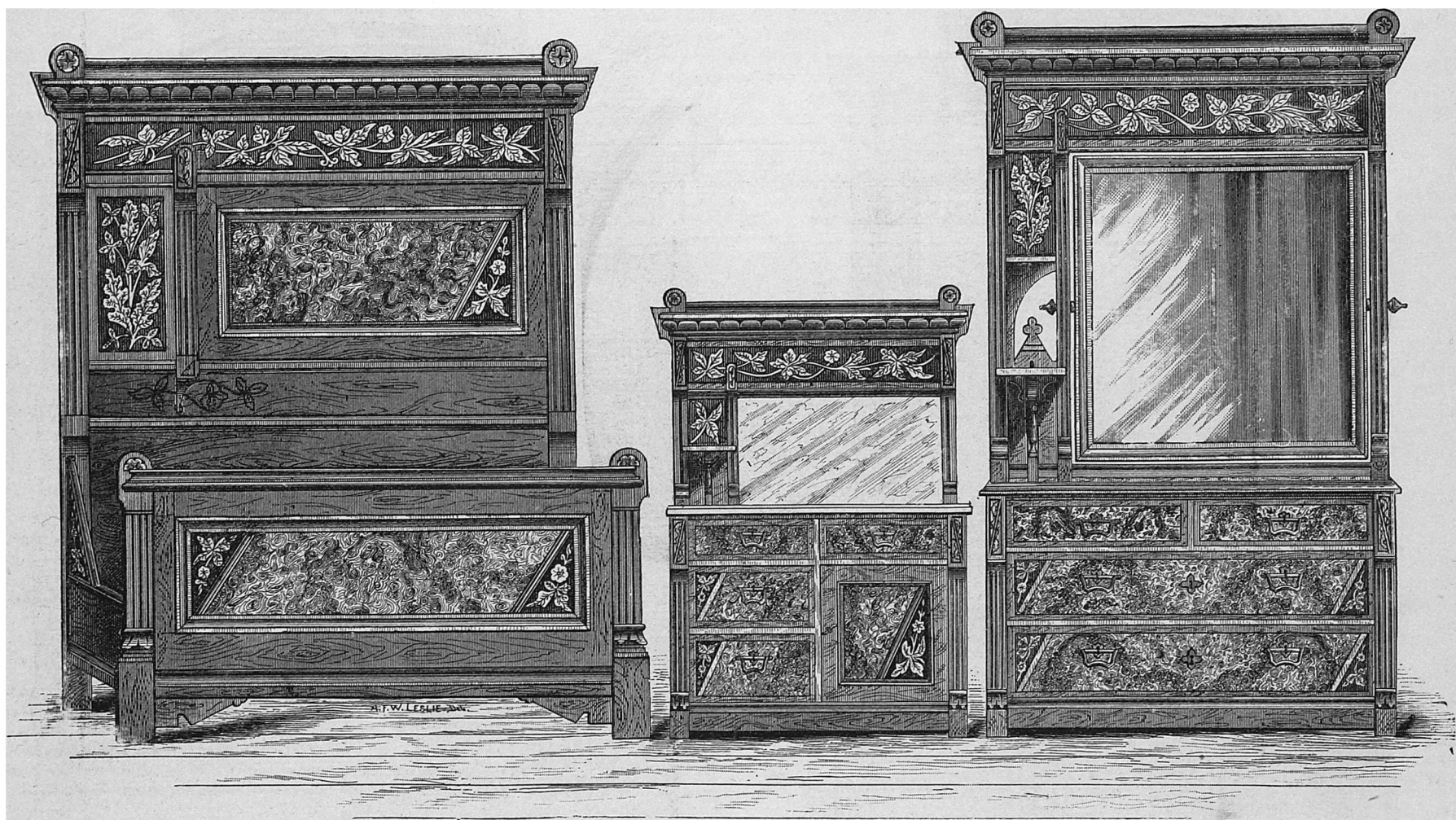
I alluded in my last letter to the revival of art iron-work, and a passing mention should now be made to the taste that fills the shops with ornamental objects in brass.

large one), are of gun metal. The caster is figured in *The Builder*, and it is said that the greater the weight the better it rolls.

Now when the respective merits of electric light or gas illumination are being warmly debated, Mr. John Dixon enters the lists with a new gas obtained by the decomposition of the component parts or constituents of metals, earthen, acids, carbons, and hydro-carbon substances, and the salts of alkalis, which he says not only does not vitiate the atmosphere like coal-gas, but is also only about one-tenth of its cost. The principle of the invention is to blend the flames of various colors, obtained from the different chemical substances, into one bright white light. The invention appears to have passed out of the laboratory stage, for a limited liability company has been formed to work the patent, and model works are being established at Liverpool.

The revival of household taste has had the effect of drawing special attention to many points in the history of the various arts, and now a Costume Society has been formed for the purpose of publishing a quarterly magazine, to be devoted to the representation of the costumes of all nations and people, a work which will be of considerable value to artists. Mr. Alma Tadema, who pays such minute attention to the historical harmony of his details, is one of the promoters. The improvements in English decoration have attracted the attention of the German critics, and Dr. Zimmern has been discoursing upon our wall decoration, our floorings, and our fire-place, generally with approval.

In concluding this letter it may be well to note that a reaction against the early English style has evidently set in, and that the elaborate decoration of the periods of Louis XIV., XV., and XVI., is now largely coming into fashion.



The above suit is from the factory of the F. M. HOLMES FURNITURE COMPANY. The design and character of ornamentation is unique and pleasing, indicating the artistic possibilities of medium-priced furniture. The pieces, as shown, are made either in walnut or mahogany, with Italian marble tops. The general style of the various pieces offers many suggestions, which may, possibly, be valuable in other directions, for this reason the illustration is given. It may indicate a method of varying the present, rather stereotyped, mode of constructing ordinary chamber furniture. Excepting one additional piece of "factory work," the illustrations in this number are the last of the kind that will be produced in this paper.

pervades American society." We here see that the artist and the sanitarian, starting from different points, arrived at the same conclusion—that in order to raise the educational level and make happier citizens, you must bring tasteful objects to the homes of all.

Various local exhibitions have lately been opened or are being arranged. The Bradford Art and Industrial Exhibition was successful, and a similar show is to be held at Manchester in November, under the presidency of the Earl of Wilton. Specimens of metal work, parquetry and stained glass, will be prominent among the objects exhibited. A loan collection of ecclesiastical art has just been exhibited at Derby in connection with the Church Congress, in which embroidery, metal work, enamels, ivories and wood-carving were largely represented. The gem of the collection was the model of the shrine of St. Ursula, from the exquisite original by Hans Memling, in the Hospital at Bruges. An exhibition of ancient and modern lace and fans opens on Saturday, October 7th, at Brighton.

Several interesting additions have been lately made to the art collections at the South Kensington Museum, such as some fine specimens of modern *sevres*, tapestries from the Government factories at Gobelins and Beauvais, fragments of ancient stained glass, from the beautiful Sainte Chapelle, in Paris, and a fine collection of Indian objects.

The Report of the Examiners in Competition for National Medals, given in 1881 to Candidates from the Schools of Art, is of considerable interest, as it contains some valuable re-

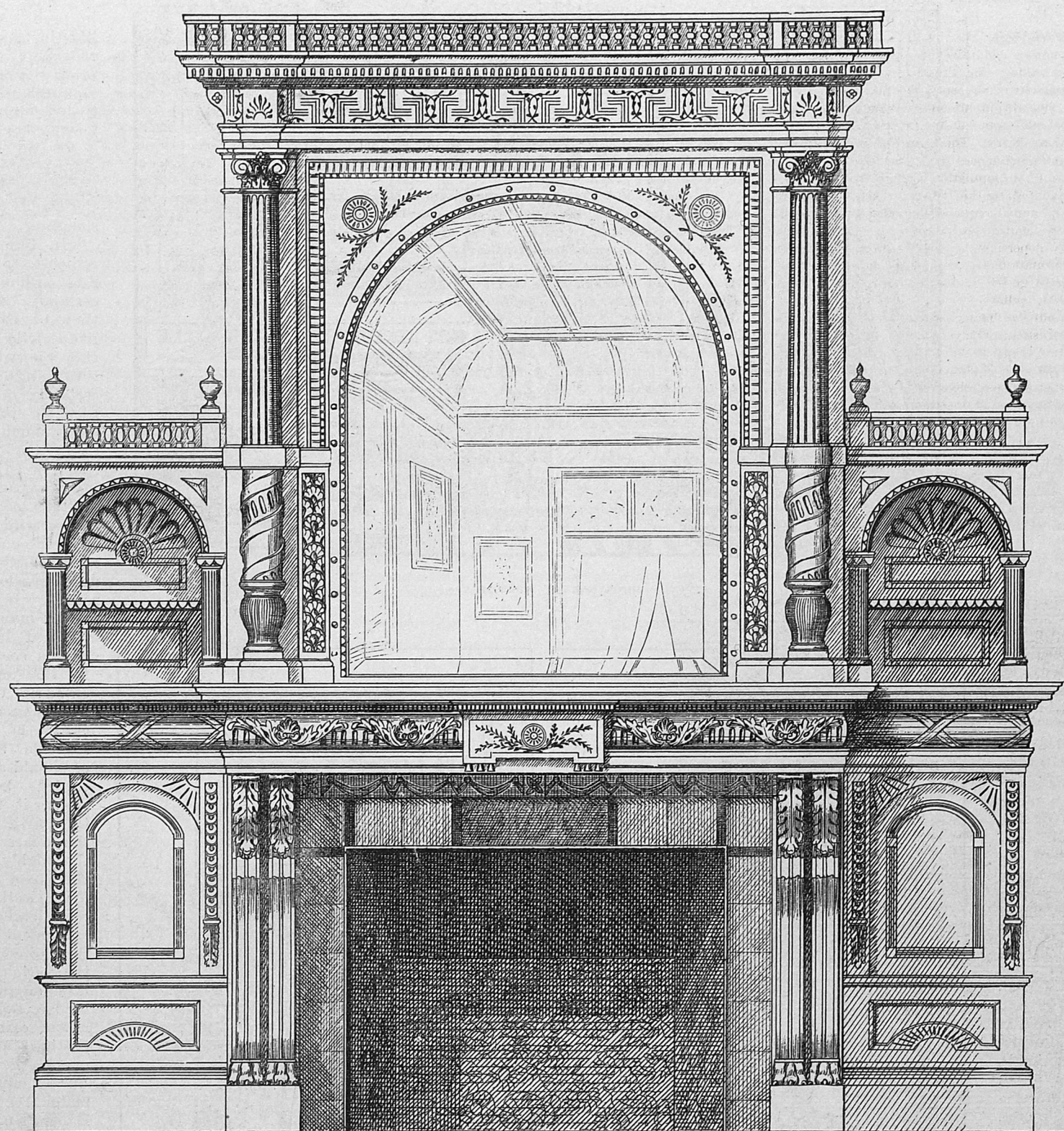
An elaborate fender in brass and bronze has just been completed by Messrs. Crichtley, Westley & Co. for a foreign order. The designer is Mr. John Ward, who has followed the Renaissance, and has exhibited much power in his treatment of the raised scrolls and leaf-work.

The Adolphi process of painting on silks, satins, etc., in oil colors, gives good promise of being very useful for decoration. It is suitable for ornamenting ladies dresses, curtains and coverings for furniture, fans and many other objects. The patentee claims for his invention that the satin or other material preserves its suppleness, and that the colors are specially bright and clear, and from experience we can state that a piece of satin, covered with a finely painted design, can be folded and pressed in the hand without any detriment to its appearance. Ordinary paints are used, but with a special medium, which is sold by the patentee. It is not needful to point out in how many ways this process may be adopted with effect. Mr. Thomas Carter, manager of the Marland Brick and Clay Works at Torrington, claims to have discovered a black pottery glaze of a most brilliant description, equal if not superior to the ancient Egyptian black glaze, which is so much admired. If this claim is proved to be correct, the discovery will have a very important influence in the future production of ornamental pottery.

Of a more practical character mention may be made of a new ball caster for heavy furniture, invented by Mr. J. B. Cohen of Melbourne. The sockets and screw collars are of brass, and balls (of which there are two, a small above the

Hangings of massive materials for window curtains and bedsteads are being adopted in many large houses, and much of this is probably due to the very splendid books of decorative design which are constantly being published in Paris.

FURNISHING A HOUSE.—A GOOD many people buy ready-made clothing, and I dare say some of them get tolerably well fitted, but I fancy most sensible people choose their own cloth and colors, and have their clothing made to suit them, and adapted for particular seasons and purposes. Why not apply the same common sense and taste to the furnishing of a house? It is all very well to say that almost any kind and character of fitting can be bought now-a-days, but, so far as my experience goes, most of the furniture offered to us is made after some particular fashion, good, bad, or indifferent, without reference to its suitability for the place each piece may have to occupy, with all kinds of expensive and unnecessary "trimmings" in the shape of carving, notching, or constructed ornament, and without regard or thought as to its providing inaccessible ledges and resting-places for dirt of all sorts. It may be urged that many people do not know exactly what they do want, and are dependent, more or less, on the upholsterer, or, again, that they want to see specimens of furniture "of sorts" from which to make a selection; that, in fact, they do not know, except in a very general way, what they really want, and, therefore, are unable to give any idea of their special requirements. In admitting all this, I can only urge the necessity of a higher art-training for the workmen and manufacturers, so that the goods they offer may be more simple, more suitable, and more artistic.—*Our Homes, and How to make them Healthy.*



This mantel is made of quartered, white oak, with bevelled plate mirror. The tiles in the centre of the facing are dark blue glazed, with raised rosette on each, and the other tiles plain red glazed, with one inch divisions in black, and the

Music Room Mantel for Mr. H. Conant.

C. F. Wilcox. Architect

hearth red glazed octagons, with black squares and black marble border. The fire-place lining, ornamented cast-iron. Cost, exclusive of tiles and fire-place, about \$850. It is in the residence of Mr. H. Conant, in Central Falls, R. I.

HINTS FOR HOME DECORATION.

By J. E. R. R.

Very handsome effects are obtained by the use of appliqué designs upon chair covers. These designs can be bought all ready for use, either in raised French embroidery or in Eastern work, and can be easily placed upon the back or seat of a chair which may be a little worn.

An inexpensive portière can be made of almost any mixed woollen goods, by inlaying a diagonal piece of deep-toned plush, velvet or cloth upon the centre, and having a border of the same arranged in points at the top and bottom. The centre and borders can be put on with ordinary stitching, and a narrow braid carried over the edges will add very much to the effect.

Designs in crewel are worked upon crash or linen and inserted behind the open work panel of an upright piano. Piano scarfs to lay upon the top of the instrument, can be very easily made in muslin. Stitch on a design in colors at either end.

Sofa cushions are very handsome if covered in plush and decorated with the appliqué designs referred to above. If small, fancy designs are chosen; they look best when arranged as if scattered upon the surface of the material. The effect of the old-fashioned "powdering" is given by this means.

It is very easy to upholster chairs at home, now that plain seats and backs are in fashion. A paper pattern the correct size should first be cut out; from this the material is cut, and then nail in place with upholsterers' tacks; a narrow gimp with brass-headed nails conceals the edges and gives a "shoppy" effect.

A very pretty design for a tea cosy is that of the tea plant with flowering blossom, which can be worked in crewels upon one side of the cosy, while upon the other a teacup and saucer in Japanese pattern look very well.

In small bedrooms a draped dressing table and glass are very pretty; in larger ones the bureau and glass are so universal that one rarely sees the transparent muslin over brightly-tinted paper muslin, which is at once so effective and so pretty. Yet for those who study decorative effects, there is really nothing that will repay them better. If, in addition, a drapery is arranged over the looking-glass and tied back with bright ribbons, the whole room will look the brighter and the prettier for it.

Handsome table-cloths are now made of jute velours, which is of wide breadth, and can be bought of the proper size in squares, to be made up at home by the addition of a bordering of deeper colored cloth, and finished off with tassels. In some cases a centre-piece of different material is appliquéd on.

Very pretty little brackets are made of Japanese fans by the simple addition of a little shelf, supported upon strips of narrow wood. The shelf can be either of cardboard or of thin wood, covered with any kind of fancy paper.

A very effective mantel finish can be made by fixing a rod and drapery from the lower part of the frieze, and letting the drapery cover the whole piece above the mantel. The drapery should fall for some distance below the mantel board and by the addition of a fringe on the edge, and then festooning the hanging in some graceful way about the mantel, a pretty combination of drop and lambrequin is made. In addition to its graceful appearance, it affords a background for pictures, plaques or statuettes. An addition is sometimes made by placing a mirror behind the centre of the hanging, and parting the drapery in the middle in such a way as to show a glimpse of it.

Bullion is much used now in effective embroideries, and so, too, is silver thread.

Chenille is a very valuable agent in the decoration of the handsome materials that are now seen on every hand. It combines well with appliqué designs, and looks extremely well at a distance. Silk chenille is used for the raised round ornaments, which correspond in decoration to the polka dots in fashionable dress fabrics.

Window curtains for the lower half of windows can be made of fine thin muslin painted in water colors. The effect of these transparencies is extremely pretty and graceful, and a great improvement where the view outside is unpleasant.

Dinner tables are now often decorated in color. Occasionally a wide strip of deeply-toned velvet is placed down the centre, and a lace insertion, let into the cloth, allows the color to be seen through. A very inexpensive way of adding decorative effect is by lightly serving little Japanese squares at each guest's plate. The effect is as if a regular pattern were carried down the sides of the table, and as these squares are inexpensive, it is of no moment if they are soiled, which is not the case when velvet and plush are used, as they sometimes are.

Scarfs to throw over the end of a sofa or lounge are very easily made, by taking a breadth of cross striped stuff and simply sewing a fringe on the ends.

Extremely pretty guest cards can be of home make. Take a yard of ottoman ribbon about an inch and a half wide, and divide it into three pieces, fringe out the ends, and in the centre of each paint a flower or emblem, beneath which the initial or name of the guest can be painted. If it is not possible to paint upon the silk, any pretty little design upon card can be pasted on. Placed upon the dinner napkins in each guest's place, these little souvenirs brighten up a table wonderfully.